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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 USIA-06 AID-05 EB-08 NSC-05
CIEP-00 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04
SIL-01 L-03 H-01 PA-01 PRS-01 /086 W
----------260718 049819 /12
R 251804Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9153
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION OECD PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, BE
SUBJECT: LABOR REACTS TO EGMONT PLAN

REF: BRUSSELS 1616

SUMMARY: BELGIAN LABOR BEGAN TODAY A SERIES OF ROLLING STRIKES IN PROTEST AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'S MILDLY BELT-TIGHTENING EGMONT PLAN. FAIRLY SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR OPENING STATE, THE STRIKES ARE WORRYING THE GOVERNMENT. THE TINDEMANS CABINET IS CONSIDERING SOME FORM OF PARTIAL BACKDOWN. BUT THE HOUR MAY BE LATE, SINCE NATIONAL TRADE UNION LEADERS APPEAR TO HAVE ONLY SHAKY CONTROL OVER RANK-AND-FILE-PARTICULARLY IN WALLONIA. END SUMMARY.

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. IN REACTION TO THE EGMONT PLAN (REFTEL) A MONTH-LONG SERIES OF "SELECTIVE"STRIKES GOT UNDERWAY TODAY IN HAINAUT AND WEST FLANDERS.
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PARALLELING THESE ACTIONS, RAIL AND PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS STAGED A NATIONWIDE 24-HOUR WALKOUT FEBRUARY 24-25. OTHER ACTIONS TODAY INCLUDED WORK STOPPAGES AND DEMONSTRATIONS IN BRUSSELS, ANTWERP, NAMUR AND LIEGE.

2. THE FOREOGIN ACTIONS, CARRIED OUT BY THE COMMON FRONT OF CHRISTIAN (CSC) AND SOCIALIST (FGTB) TRADE UNIONS, WERE, ACCORDING

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TO FIRST REPORTS, MODERATELY SUCCESSFUL. THE 24-HOUR NATIONWIDE RAIL STRIKE IS 100 PERCENT EFFECTIVE. IN WEST FLANDERS TARGET FIRMS IN THE TEXTILE AND METAL SECTORS WERE COMPLETELY SHUT DOWN. IN HAINAUT 80-90 PERCENT OF TEACHERS AND CIVIL SERVICE WORKERS STAYED HOME. IN ANTWERP ONLY 30-35 PERCENT OF CIVIL SERVANTS WERE OUT. IN BRUSSELS 10,000 STRIKING RAIL AND PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS STAGED A DOWNTOWN RALLY AND AN UNEVENTFUL DEMONSTRATION MARCH. NAMUR WAS LITTLE AFFECTED BY WALKOUTS, BUT THE BIG INDUSTRIAL CENTER, LIEGE, WAS WELL SHUT DOWN FOR SEVERAL HOURS.
END UNCLASSIFIED.

3. COMMENT: A STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS FEBRUARY 19 CHARACTERIZING THE PLANNED ACTIONS "POLITICAL STRIKES" APPEARS TO HAVE FUELED THE MILITANCY OF LABOR'S RANK-AND-FILE WITH CSC UNIONS IN WALLONIA IN A PARTICULARLY REBELLIOUS MOOD-TO THE DISCOMFITURE OF CSC'S PRO-GOVERNMENT NATIONAL LEADERSHIP. THERE ARE SIGNS THAT THE CABINET MAY BE HEADING OPPOSITION SPOKESMAN ANDRE COOLS' ADVICE TO RETREAT FROM AN OUTRIGHT CONFRONTATION WITH LABOR. TODAY'S CABINET MEETING MAY IN FACT BE A "MINE-EGMONT," SOFTENING SOME OF THE AUSTERITY MEASURES APPROVED ONLY TWO WEEKS AGO. THE SCHEDULED TAX RISE ON TOBACCO PRODUCTS IS RUMORED TO BE UP FOR RESCISSION. RENNER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
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Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770067-0497
Format: TEL
From: BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770210/aaaaaizo.tel
Line Count: 84
Litigation Code IDs:
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Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 6a481fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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